

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claim 1 is allowable and that claims 3 and 4 contain allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-6 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 2 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 2.

Objections

Claims 3 and 4 are objected to for depending from a rejected base claim. Claim 3 is amended in this response to incorporate each of the limitations of the claim from which it depends. Claim 4 depends from claim 3 and therefore incorporates the limitations of amended claim 3. Thus, both claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,154,510, issued to Katagiri (“Katagiri”). Claim 2 has been amended in this reply to clarify the present invention recited. In particular, the “sandwiched” limitation has been clarified to recite that the sandwiching occurs between a first rib and two protrusions. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claim, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Katagiri discloses a lens barrel for a camera having an inner sheath formed with slits which interact with extending tabs mounted on a peripheral surface of a movable lens. Katagiri fails to disclose or suggest a configuration as recited in amended claim 2, in which a first *rib* interacts with a pair of projections to form a sandwiched configuration, thereby advantageously restricting movement in a circumferential direction. Katagiri instead relies on slits and tabs. The slits in the lens housing according to Katagiri may result in a weakening or instability of the lens unit, whereas the first rib according to claim 2 will advantageously provide structural support for the focus ring and/or lens unit, in addition to limiting circumferential displacement.

In view of the above, Katagiri fails to disclose or suggest the present invention as recited in amended claim 2. Thus, claim 2 as amended is patentable over Katagiri. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Katagiri. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 5 depends from amended claim 2 and therefore incorporates the limitations of claim 2, as amended. Claim 5 is therefore patentable over Katagiri for at least the same reasons described above with respect to claim 2. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Katagiri in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,536,906, issued to Fujimori et al. (“Fujimori”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 6 depends indirectly from amended claim 2 and therefore incorporates the limitations of claim 2, as amended. Claim 6 is therefore patentable over Katagiri for at least the same reasons described above with respect to claim 2. Fujimori also fails to disclose or suggest that which Katagiri lacks, namely a first rib positioned and configured to interact with a pair of projections. Thus, claim 6 is patentable over Katagiri and Fujimori, whether considered separately or in combination. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 04536.017001).

Respectfully submitted,

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